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WAR FOOD ADMINISTRATION
Office of Marketing Services
Washington 25, D. C.

April 23, 1945

The following statement concerning the status of beekeepers relative to Selective Service has been approved by the Office of Labor of this Administration, and can be given publicity if desired:

Harold J. Clay

Harold J. Clay, Chief
Honey and Peanut Section
Special Commodities Branch

Beekeeping Still Considered Essential Agricultural Activity

With the discarding of the war unit basis of classifying agricultural workers which was in effect until a few months ago, confusion exists in the minds of some beekeepers as to their Selective Service status. Basically it has changed but little.

Final responsibility for classifying registrants continues to lie with the local Selective Service Boards. However, beekeeping is still considered an essential agricultural activity, and under the Tydings amendment beekeepers are eligible for deferment consideration.

That amendment clearly states that "Every registrant found by a Selective Service Board, subject to appeal. . . , to be necessary to and regularly engaged in an agricultural occupation or endeavor essential to the war effort, shall be deferred from training and service in the land and naval forces so long as he remains so engaged and until such time as a satisfactory replacement can be obtained." On January 22, 1945, General Hershey notified State Directors of Selective Service that the Tydings amendment has not been "changed or modified in any manner."

The production of honey was first listed officially by the Selective Service System as an essential agricultural activity in Local Board Release 164, effective January 16, 1943, and headed "Classification of Registrants in Agriculture." The same classification, that of an essential agricultural activity, was repeated in an amendment, issued on May 12, 1944, to Selective Service Memorandum 119. Beekeeping has been officially interpreted as coming within the Group 5 category, "Agricultural Products and Services."

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The last listing of essential activities, dated January 13, 1945, and issued by the War Manpower Commission, includes, under Group 5A, "Agriculture," and as such takes in the various subdivisions of agriculture previously listed as essential agricultural activities, including beekeeping. Similarly "Agricultural Services" listed as 5B in the January 13, 1945, memorandum, takes in the production and shipment of package bees and queens.

The importance of beekeeping to the agricultural world and the fact that honeybees are indispensable to the growing of many crops through their pollinating activities are considered even more important to our present food economy than the production of honey, important as that is in the present sugar shortage, and also more important than the production of beeswax, though that, too, is badly needed in the war effort. Bees are especially essential in dairy communities and in other areas where legumes are produced and where the output of milk and butter can be expected to go down when bees are not present to maintain seed production. Bees are definitely vital to the war effort in their contribution to the pollination of many fruits, and of many seed plants, of which the yield is even now insufficient to take care of our own needs and to fill calls for overseas shipment.